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Mr. GARRICK's CONDUCT,

AS MANAGER of the Theatre-Royal
in *Drury-Lane*, considered.

IN A
LETTER
Addressed to HIM.

F. 18.

Forſan et hæc olim memorare juvabit. Virg.



L O N D O N :

Printed for C. CORBETT, in *Fleet-street*.

MR. GARRICK'S

CONDUCT

As Manager of the Theatre-François
in Paris, France, considered.

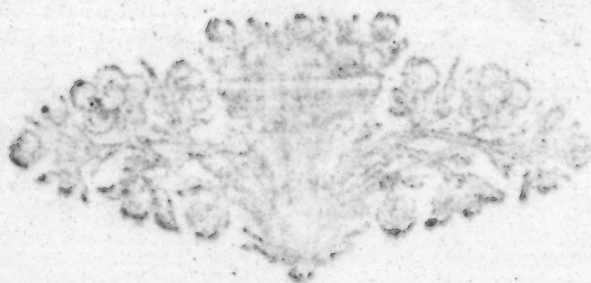
IN A

LETTER

Addressed to Him.



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LONDON:

Printed for C. CORBETT, in Fleet-Street.

THE EXTRACT OF A LETTER
FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE
LETTER TO MR. GARRICK
TO THE PUBLIC

A
L E T T E R
T O
Mr. GARRICK

S I R,
THIS Letter is not intended as a
Piece of formal Criticism on your
Merit as a Player, nor a satyrical
Essay upon the Fondness of the Town for
public Diversions ; but owes its Rise intirely
to your Conduct and Behaviour this Season,
as a Patentee of the Theatre-Royal in *Dru-*
ry-Lane.

Now, though the Public seem to agree to
consider you in both Lights ; I must do
you the Justice to say, I think they bear
hard upon you in this one Particular ; That
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(107)

the excessive Merit attributed to you as a Player, heightens all your Faults as a Manager: a Disadvantage arising from your own Conduct at the opening of the Season, for no one can be so absurd as to imagine but that You, (who must be allowed to be a Person of great Forecast and Circumspection) had a View to your own Profit when you made your late Purchase; neither can we conceive that it was not upon deep Consideration when you resolved to be a Patentee and a Player at the same time; whether such a Resolution was prudent or not, is now no proper time to determine: the only thing I propose to make any Observations upon at present, is your Behaviour as a Manager.

Drury-Lane Theatre is as yet the only Place we can resort to for a polite public Entertainment; and the crowded Houses you have hitherto had, are a strong Evidence of the reigning Passion of the People for Plays; and afford us at the same time a convincing Proof that there is Advantage enough accruing from your present Set of Customers, to defray the Expences of the House, with a considerable Overplus of Profit to yourself: it therefore throws it upon You to account for the Entertainments you have thought fit to afford them this Season.

(11)

I am unwilling to lay too heavy a Charge of Vanity upon You; but surely you had a mind to try the Temper of your Friends, when instead of bespeaking their Favour to you as a Manager, by appearing in some favourite Character at the pompous opening of your New House, You, perhaps, thought it Condescension enough to honour us with a *Prologue*, and then gravely tell us, how unhappy we were that you did not continue to speak it; and instead of publishing it in the daily Papers, kindly give us leave to compensate our Disappointment, (as you daintily phrase it) at so small a Price as *Six-Pence* a piece--What can this be attributed to, but a false Persuasion that the favourite Actor cannot err as a Manager?

If *Albumazar* was a valuable forgotten Relique of Wit, was it beneath your Dignity to support a Character in it; or was that a Piece as a Manager, not worthy your Notice, which as a Player, you, perhaps, had resented as an Affront to be excluded from? or could you imagine the Town would, without Regret, be deprived of the Pleasure of seeing the Wit of our Ancestors embellished by your All-faultless Action? If you had continued in the single Character of a great Player, Self-Esteem would

have made this a just Thought ; while as an artful Manager, whose Business it is to keep our Appetites sharp sett, it was a Trifle of Fame not worthy your Regard.

I dare appeal to your own Heart, with what Joy you heard it demanded, why does not *Garrick* himself act ? Nothing, I own, could be a stronger Proof of your Merit : For the greater the Resentment shown at your not acting, the greater your Honour as an Actor, and the greater your *Finèſſe* as a Manager ; since it is a Proof that you are the only necessary Ingredient in all our Theatrical Entertainments ; and that without You all the rest is languid and insipid, scarce worthy the Name of Diversion.

But perhaps I am mistaken, and to us who see no farther than the Curtain, Your not acting was owing to a more generous Motive : There may, perhaps, have been too frequent Murmurings and Complaints among your People, who may have rashly undertaken to support the House by their own Merit : If that was really the Case, they have found themselves greatly mistaken ; for however they may please in a particular Character or two, it is You only can alone please in all : like a Great General, though the Gross of the Army fights
the

the Battle, You run away with the Praise and Merit of the Victory; I might, I believe, add the Profit too. — But it is possible You may say, What is all this to me as a Manager? not an improper Question I confess, as the avowed Subject-Matter of this short Letter, is an Inquiry into Your Behaviour in that Station: to which Question, therefore, persuade Yourself to receive this Answer.

If I apprehend Your Business aright, it is, to provide at such Prices as shall be thought reasonable, certain amusing and improving Diversions, called *Tragedies* and *Comedies*, for the Convenience and Entertainment of all those who have a Relish for such Pleasures, yet want a Fund to afford them singly at their own Expence: and, for their better Accommodation, You are bound, according to the Custom of the Theatres, to give us a Daily Bill of Fare; thereby letting us know what we are to expect. Now though Your Intimates may object, that since the Bill of Fare is published, No-body need come but what likes to take part of the Entertainment, No-body being either compelled or deceived; and that if they can see no Play with Pleasure but what Mr. *Garrick* has a principal Part in, they have no occasion to contribute

towards

towards the Expence of the Evening's Diversion, till they think it worth their while: Yet, with their Leave, this is no Answer at all; for it is Your Part to furnish out the Entertainment in the best Manner You possibly can; we trust to Your Care for that Purpose, and the Presumption is on Your Side that You do so: It was this Presumption in favour of former Managers, that raised You to the high Pitch of Fame; which, by the Caprice of Fashion, You are arrived at: for I do not remember that the Town called for You to appear in any particular Characters; but the Manager, at a Venture, applied You to different Parts, and the captivated Town approved of the Choice.

Common Sense is the best Rule to be guided by; it is the most equitable Judge in all Matters of Dispute; and, if You please, she shall decide between the Town and You: but remember, Sir, not as Mr. Garrick the Player, but as Mr. Garrick the Patentee, or one of the Co-Patentees of the Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*: for though I have nothing to say to him, I must not forget You have a Brother Consul and Colleague in Royalty.

You

You will, I make no doubt, reflect with great Satisfaction on the Pleasure You frequently gave the Town in the Character of *Bayes*. To do You Justice, the ridiculous Light in which You exposed the Mistakes of your Brother Comedians, (for such they then were) though attended with some Degree of Cruelty, deserved the Applause You gained at *Good-man's-Fields* House: and as we had no Reason to be displeased with You in the Attempt of the Character, so we were obliged to Mr. *Giffard* for casting You into that Part; but if we reverse this Observation, would not he have been highly to blame if he had forbore, nay denied, giving the Town the best Diversion in his Power.

The Part of *Othello* had been played and by some been thought, (no doubt ignorantly) to have been well played by Mr. *Quin*: You ventured to attempt the Character; the Manager, I may say, hazarded You in the Attempt, but the judicious Town applauded your acting. Let us consider this in another Light: Suppose, for mere Argument-Sake, that You had failed in your Attempt. Suppose the Town had judged Mr. *Quin* supported the Character

Character of *Othello* better than You, would the Manager, after that, have been justified in continuing to have given You that Part? sure he would not; and why? the Answer is, because he had a much better Actor for that Part, in the Opinion of the Town, to put in your Place.

As a Manager, Sir, it is your Business not only to prepare the Evening's Entertainment, but to prepare it in the best manner You are able; and the Manager who does otherwise, uses his Customers ill.

It is not impossible but if this Letter is esteemed by You as worthy of the Honour of an Answer, (You see I too have my Share of Vanity of supposing it) we may probably be told, that the Town is not yet full; that the best and politest Part of the Company will not be here for some time. Suppose this true, what follows, are the Clowns who now visit You to be poisoned? If it is beneath the Dignity of Mr. *Garrick's* elevated Station to play to any but Stars and Garters; yet his Duty, as a Manager, obliged him not to give us Trash, to call it no worse, instead of substantial Food. Was the *Scornful Lady*, with the scandalous Character of *Parson Roger*, and the no less foolish one of

of Nurse *Abigail*, a fit Entertainment for You to offer, or for us to receive? Surely it could not be desired by any but your *Upper Gallery Auditors*; however, one thing is evident, if here is a Fault, you can throw it upon No-body else for You, and you only were to blame as a Manager. Many Persons paid for a Share of that Night's infamous Performance; the consisting Parts of which they were intirely Strangers to: You must have read the Play; You knew that Folly and Nonsense were not its only Faults: the repeated irreligious, not to say, atheistical Expressions in it, made it too shocking to be offered by an understanding Manager, as a proper Entertainment for a rational, polite, or Christian Audience.

Mr. *Macklin* behaved extremely well on that Occasion, and every-body must commend his applying to the Audience in the handsome Manner he did; which cleared himself, and his dear *Abigail* of all Blame, when he said, as clearly as I can remember, 'Gentlemen, if there is any thing in us that is amiss, we will rectify it as well as we can.' Mr. *Macklin* could say no more: let us consider what Light he stood in at that Juncture with regard to the Audience; the better Part of whom,

I am sure, if not the major Part, sufficiently showed their Dislike of what was then going on : Mr. *Macklin*, who was only concerned as an Actor, probably apprehended he played the Part ill ; for I chuse to suppose he might have Good-nature enough not to throw the Blame on poor Nurse *Abigail* ; but that was not the occasion of the Dislike shown, and he received an Answer sufficient to remove from them any Uneasiness on that Account : it was the Play, not the Actor, that was disliked. Let this be a Warning to You in your future Conduct as a Manager.

Though, Sir, Mr. *Garrick*, the Manager, and Mr. *Garrick* the Player, are really one and the same Person, yet they must always be considered separately, and in different Lights : For we have, and always shall have, an incontestible Right, while there is such a Player as Mr. *Garrick*, to ask Mr. *Garrick* the Manager, why Mr. *Garrick* the Player is not ordered to entertain us : but if there is no such Player as Mr. *Garrick*, we have been mistaken all this time ; and I shall heartily beg your Pardon for giving You this Trouble, as soon as I am convinced of my Error.

Consider

Consider a little, with what Grace can You hope to be favoured towards the End of the Season with a Benefit as a Player, who have as a Manager, so far as lies in your Power, at the Beginning of Season, claimed and supported a Right to direct not only what Entertainments we shall have, but what we shall be commanded to receive as good, true, just, and rational Amusements.

As I proceed, I cannot help owning, that I had very great Expectations from a Patentee, who was an applauded Player, and a much approved Author ; I flattered myself we should soon see our *English* Stage rise to the Dignity of the antient *Greek* and *Roman* Theatres. I had taken leave of Farce and Buffoonry, and I own I could have wished You had so far taken Advantage of the Favour of the Town, as to have convinced us, that *Shakespear* and *Otway*, *Dryden* and *Congreve*, *Addison* and *Steele*, stood no longer in need of Ribaldry to support their sinking Fame ; nor need give place to the simple *Albumazar*, or the immoral *Scornful Lady*. Here, if You had exerted yourself, all your true Admirers would have supported You ; and the generous Companion have finished his

Evening, in telling Your Praise, and toasting to Your Success.

Success has, perhaps, ruined more People than Difficulties and Necessities: and the Wallet on the Back has been too often forgotten by him who has mistakenly fancied himself above Error and Blunder; while the Man who had nothing else to support his Spirits, but Industry and Diligence, has, by a submissive Repentance and Care to amend former Follies, rendered himself a happy Favourite; and been able at last to defy the future Frowns of Fortune.

If from a just Calculation of the Charges and Profits of the Playhouse, or if from several Years Observation of the Taste of the Town, You are persuaded that You are under no Necessity to pay any Regard to the Delight of your Customers; and if You do not care whether You continue their Favourite or not, or know Yourself so securely their Favourite, that no Indiscretions can abate their Kindness, or lessen their good Opinion, You will very properly laugh at this Letter; but if You are of a different Sentiment, You will then think me a Friend, and will believe either that You have done wrong and ought to amend,

amend, or, at least, that You are in danger of being thought guilty of gross Misconduct, and highly blameable as a Manager for what has hitherto passed.

In either Case, You will give the best Answer You can to these Sheets, by taking away every Cause, and every reasonable Suspicion of Complaint.

I have no Quarrel with Mr. *Garrick*, no particular Friendship with any, (if any such there are) who have a Quarrel with him. I intend You no Hurt by this Epistle : I hope I have avoided all indecent Expressions, and kept my Pen within its proper Bounds : for I assure You, Sir, I heartily wish to have the Pleasure of seeing that Part of the *English* Theatre, which is under Your Management, receive the highest Applause, by maintaining the exactest Decorum : and this might reasonably have been hoped for upon good Grounds ; for our Theatres never had a better Prospect than at present. They are now reduced to two ; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, are by that means freed from all Necessity of exhibiting immoral Comedies, and pitiful Farces, to make up by the Profits arising from a mean Audience, the want of a more honourable one ; and to comfort themselves for
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the apparent Loss of Esteem, by the evident Proof of a rich Purse.

This, then, being the present Circumstance of our Theatres,¹ there is but one Question left for our Consideration, namely, Whether there is Reason to expect sufficient Audiences to answer the Expence of a polite Entertainment, without calling in the Assistance of the lowest Dregs of the People? I need only appeal to the Sentiments of the Town with regard to Your own Merit as an Actor, to answer the Question. If any Man was to be asked for what particular Character he applauded Mr. Garrick, he would never tell you it was for playing the *Lying Valet*, or *Beau Fripple*. No, Sir, if such a Question was proposed, we should hear of the Jealous *Othello*, the Unhappy *Lear*, the Impatient *Hotspur*, the Vain *Lotbario*, the Dutiful *Hamlet*, the Politic *Richard*, or the Self-conceited *Bayes*.

If this be true, lay hold of the Opportunities to please that are now in Your Power: free Yourself from the Bondage of Ignorance: call to the Assistance of the Manager the more than one applauded Player. Get up the best of our *English* Tragedies and Comedies; encourage the
rising

rising Wits, and be under no Apprehension of the Want of Success: believe me, Sir, You will not be reduced to the slavish Necessity of playing perpetually. A prudent Disposition of the best Parts to the best Actors, with a judicious Variety, and a proper Acquiescence to the general Opinion of the Public, will answer the Expectations of the Town, and prevent future Complaints against You as a Manager.

You see I have been hardy enough to venture in some Places to turn your Adviser; an Office which I do not pretend to claim as a Right, though, perhaps, that Claim might be supported; but from a Desire of seeing the Theatre reformed, and the Town entertained in a sensible manner, I have ventured to undertake, and I flatter myself I have fully proved this to be in your Power: and if so, all that our future Entertainments shall fall short of in this Point, will, with Justice, be placed to your Account; and You will, I presume, never be able to clear Yourself from Blame.

Perhaps You will say it had been much kinder if I had thought fit to send this to You, and not have made public an Epistle
of

of this kind: if, Sir, I had any personal Acquaintance with You, or had believed that You would have paid any Regard to my private Thoughts, I might probably have done so: but being an intire Stranger to You in private Life, I chose this Method to acquaint You with my Sense of Things; because if this Letter has the good Fortune to be approved of by the Public, it will become their Sentiments; and will then be intitled to some Respect from You, upon that Account: but if it has the Ill-Luck to displease, You will be justified in considering it as a Trifle below your Regard; and, possibly, may have a Right to imagine there are but few, and those few, mistaken too, who pretend to find fault with your Conduct as a Manager.

I wish You all reasonable Success as a Patentee; but be not angry, when I tell You, I hope the valuable Applause You are in Possession of, may raise the Ardour of some future Theatrical Heroes to aim, at least to equal, if not excel, the Merit of the hitherto thought inimitable Mr. *Garrick*. And that You will have Generosity enough to encourage, as far as it may lie in your Power, every such Praise-worthy Attempt. I am the easier led to hope so, as I am apt to believe it is Your own Desire; nay
more,

more that it is the very thing You are endeavouring to bring about: for, by the Care You have taken to engross all Theatrical Merit within the Circle of your own Power, You have reduced us to the Necessity of thinking, we have a just Foundation for such Hopes; since You have not yet thought proper to produce several whom You very well know the Town would have seen with great Pleasure. But it is with me beyond a Doubt, that meritorious as they were thought last Winter, they still in your Judgment stand in need of great Improvement. The Pains You were at to procure them, and the expensive Bargains You have made with them, certainly must allow You a Right as Manager to determine when they will be capable of shining in the Manner You think they at present fall short of. If this be not the Reason, how will You account with Us for locking up your Treasure, and suffering us so long to want the Pleasure, which in the Opinion of the best Judges they are capable of giving Us? No-body will venture to insinuate that You have burthened Yourself with useless Actors, only with Intent to deprive Mr. *Rich* of the Power of entertaining us, and so cheating us of one half of our public Diversions. Such a

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Thought

Thought leads to so many others of the same kind equally injurious to your unblemished Reputation, that I chuse to suppress it, or rather prove the Impossibility of it, by appealing to that Abhorrence of all Meanness, and that excessive Candour and Generosity, which so eminently adorn and distinguish your private Life, and make You more valued as a Man, than admired as an Actor.

Give me Leave to conclude, with assuring You, that as I did not set out with a Design to daub You with either Flattery or Abuse, so I had not the most distant Intention of raising any unwarrantable Indignation against You : my only Design was to let You, and some others into the true State of the Question : If I have come up to my Purpose, You will not blame me ; if I have failed in it, I ask Pardon
of

(27)

of every one who may have put himself to the Expence and Trouble of reading so trifling a Letter, and particularly Yours.

I am, Sir,

Your very Humble Servant,

Oct. 18, 1747.

E. F.

FINIS.

(76)
and every one who may have had
to do with him, has been obliged to
pay him a guinea of gold, and
has been obliged to pay him a guinea
of gold.

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Mr. Q--N, and Mr. B---Y. The
first considered in the Part of *Lear*,
the two last opposed in *Othello*.

Virginibus Puerisque Canto. HOR.

By S. FOOTE Esq;